



# Spirit of Honshu

SUPERIOR

8 Nights

Tokyo &gt; Nikko &gt; Izu Peninsula &gt; Kyoto



Take in Tokyo by boat as you cruise down the Sumida River to Hamarikyu Gardens



Visit the extravagant woodland temple complex of Nikko



Marvel at the stunning scenery of the beautiful Izu Peninsula



Enjoy a private audience with an apprentice geisha in Kyoto



Feel dwarfed by Todai-ji's giant Buddha in Nara



Stay in a luxury traditional *ryokan* with a delicious *kaiseki* dinner



Enjoy a boat ride across Sagami Bay

## IJT SUPERIOR TOURS

High-quality accommodation, several meals & entrance fees included, in-depth cultural immersion

### Style Facts

- Local professional guides & experts in key destinations (in addition to your tour leader)
- Some private minibus transfers where beneficial
- Four to five-star accommodation
- En suite rooms in all locations
- Airport meet-and-greet and transfers
- Breakfast every day plus several lunches and dinners
- Most entrance fees included
- Selected luggage forwarding included
- Solo travellers: a single room is available throughout on payment of a mandatory supplement

## Tour Overview

Have a limited amount of time and want to get the most out of your visit to Japan? If so, this is the tour for you. In between stays in Japan's two greatest cities, Tokyo and Kyoto, you'll relax in hot springs, explore the beautiful Izu Peninsula, and make day trips to the fascinating historical sites of Nikko and Nara.

Starting with three nights in the hectic buzz that is Japan's capital city, your tour leader will help you navigate the whirlwind - accompanying you on a boat trip down the Sumida River and a visit to the serene Hamarikyu Gardens and the Meiji Shrine. In the evening, we recommend dinner at a traditional *izakaya* restaurant.

During your stay in Tokyo, you'll also head out of the capital to muse on the "see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil" monkey carvings in Nikko's extravagant shrine and temple complex of Toshogu.

Next you'll stay in a superb *ryokan* inn with a variety of hot spring baths to choose from on the stunning Izu Peninsula - an area of national park whose views of Mount Fuji, sweeping coastlines and forested interior make it the perfect antidote to the unrelenting crowds of Japan's cities.

An essential three-night stay in Kyoto will allow you to immerse yourself in the spirituality and traditions of Japan's undisputed cultural heart.

Here it seems as though every sliding door conceals a bewitching garden or a historic temple. You will have ample opportunity to explore several of these with your tour leader and a local guide. A real treat is in store when you meet a *maiko*, or apprentice geisha. These multi-talented traditional entertainers embody the mystery and refinement that Japanese culture is famous for, and this is a privileged chance to be in the company of one of these remarkable performers in person.

Concluding your trip with an excursion to Nara, you'll no doubt feel dwarfed by the spectacular giant Buddha of Todai-ji, and love feeding *senbei* crackers to the resident deer in this ancient capital.

Throughout the tour you'll stay in superior-grade accommodation, enjoying the very best in Japanese cuisine and travelling by first-class rail and private transport.



## Day by day

Many of our customers choose to arrive a day or two early to get over jet-lag and get the most out of the tour. Whatever the case, we will be happy to make arrangements to suit your needs.

### Day 1 Tokyo (D)

Welcome to Japan! Upon arrival at Tokyo's Narita or Haneda Airport you will be met by your driver and escorted by private car to your hotel in the Asakusa district. Your tour leader will be waiting to welcome you in the lobby when you arrive. Asakusa is Tokyo's most traditional quarter, full of lively market stalls and home to the city's oldest temple, Senso-ji. This is a great place to begin exploring the city on your first afternoon. Later this evening, your tour leader will give a full trip briefing over an included

welcome drink, then take you out for a first-night meal with your group, where you'll get a great introduction to Japanese food and etiquette – as well as some exciting information about the days ahead!

#### Day 2 Tokyo (B)

Today's tour of Tokyo will include a cruise down the Sumida River from Asakusa, arriving at the lovely Hamarikyu Gardens, former property of generations of Tokugawa shoguns. Take traditional refreshments in the beautiful teahouse, surrounded by the garden's. In the afternoon we'll use a private coach to visit Meiji Shrine, set in the midst of a wooded park, then wander the neon skyscraper district of Shinjuku, stopping to admire the view from the top of the Metropolitan Government Building. The evening will be free for you to explore the city under your own steam – your tour leader will have plenty of suggestions on how best to spend your time.

#### Day 3 Nikko (B)

Today is an excursion day to Nikko: enchanting resting-place of Japan's most important shogun, Tokugawa Ieyasu, and famous throughout Japan for its dazzlingly ornate architecture. After a wonderful train journey through the countryside to Tokyo's north, you'll wander amongst elaborate shrines and temples set in a Japanese cedar forest, admire the carving of the "see-no-evil" monkeys and cross the famous vermilion Shinkyo Bridge, gracefully arching its way over the Daiya River. Hopefully there will be time to peruse the shops in pleasant Nikko town, before we hop on the train and make our way back to the big city. Railway tickets, entrance fees and the services of an expert local guide will all be included in the tour today, and of course, your tour leader will be with you throughout.

#### Day 4 Izu Peninsula (B, L, D)

Today you will hop aboard a private coach bound for the Izu Peninsula, a strip of lush, mountainous land about 100 km (60 miles) to the southwest of Tokyo.

We'll be stopping en route at the MOA Museum of Art and taking in the dramatic scenery from the Jikkoku Pass, which on clear days offers views of Mount Fuji.

For your two nights on the peninsula you will be staying at a luxurious *ryokan*, a traditional Japanese inn set in a beautiful woodland grove. Here you'll sleep on comfortable futon mattresses laid out on *tatami* mats, and have the chance to take advantage of the *ryokan*'s impressive selection of natural hot spring baths. A top-quality *kaiseki* (multi-course, haute cuisine) dinner will be included on both nights of your stay.

#### Day 5 Izu Peninsula (B, D)

On day five, your adventure continues as you further explore the stunning Jogasaki coast with visits to Mount Omuro and the picturesque harbour-side town of Shimoda. Again travelling by private coach, we'll ensure an early enough return to the *ryokan* for you to enjoy some relaxing down-time in your beautiful rooms and the soothing baths, before a second night of exquisite *kaiseki* meal.

#### Day 6 Kyoto (B, D)

Today will be a varied travel day, as we make our way by private coach to the northern end of the

Izu Peninsula. If the weather is clear, you'll be able to enjoy spectacular views of Mount Fuji as you make the trip across the bay.

From Shimizu you'll hop aboard the *shinkansen* bullet train and speed west at up to 320 kph (200 mph) to Kyoto, formerly Japan's imperial capital for over a millennium.

Our mid-afternoon arrival in Kyoto will allow you some down-time before your tour leader takes the group to a favourite local restaurant for an included dinner.

#### Day 7 Kyoto (B)

You'll have the services of a knowledgeable Kyoto local as well as your tour leader today, as you explore the ancient temples, shrines, gardens and teahouses of this magnificent city. A visit to the stunning Golden Pavilion at Kinkaku-ji, a few Zen moments at Ryoan-ji's famous rock garden and exploration of the bamboo groves of Arashiyama – just a few highlights of today's tour.

Kyoto is well known as a centre of geisha culture, and later this afternoon, you will have an exclusive audience with a *maiko* (trainee geisha), during which you'll be able to watch a dance performance, ask questions, take photos and catch a rare, more intimate glimpse into a famously secretive and fascinating culture.

#### Day 8 Nara (B,D)

Join your tour leader for a tour of nearby Nara, a well-preserved city with a small-town atmosphere and many historical treasures. Highlights today will include seeing the giant Buddha, housed in the largest wooden building in the world, and feeding *shika senbei* crackers to the vast herd of friendly deer that inhabit expansive Nara Park.

Back in Kyoto you'll enjoy a farewell dinner with your group at one of the city's superb restaurants – a great chance to talk over your experiences and say goodbye to your companions and tour leader.

#### Day 9 Kyoto (B)

The following morning you'll travel by shared taxi to Kansai Airport for your flight home. Have a safe journey home!

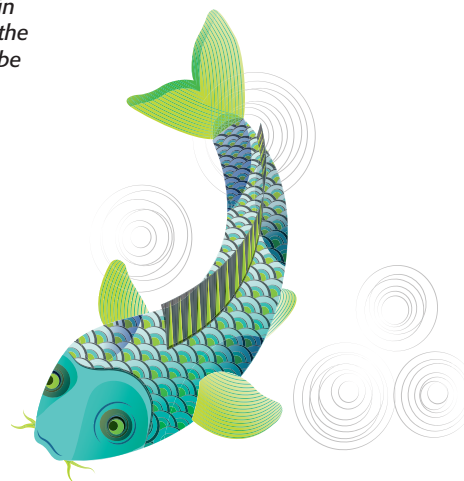
*Our tours aim to be as flexible as possible, so there is no set-in-stone itinerary for each day. You will be provided on the ground with Day-by-Day sheets and the tour leader will outline what they are going to do each day in detail. If you would like to break away from the group and do something different, they will be available to offer advice, and help you plan your day.*

## What's included

- ✓ Your InsideJapan Info-Pack
- ✓ Arrival transfer by private car
- ✓ All transport between destinations in Japan
- ✓ Full-time services of your tour leader
- ✓ Eight nights' accommodation
- ✓ Breakfast every day, one lunch and five evening meals
- ✓ IC transport card with 2,500 yen credit for city transport
- ✓ Sumida River Cruise & entrance to the Hamarikyu Gardens
- ✓ Sightseeing in Nikko (including taxis, trains, entrance fees & expert local guide)
- ✓ Two days sightseeing on the Izu Peninsula by private coach (entrance fees and lunch included)
- ✓ Luggage forwarding from Izu Peninsula to Kyoto
- ✓ Full day with an expert local guide in Nikko and Kyoto (entrance fees included)
- ✓ An exclusive audience with a trainee geisha
- ✓ Day trip to Nara (including train tickets and entrance fees)
- ✓ Departure transfer by shared taxi service
- ✓ Shared portable Wi-Fi access throughout trip

## NOT Included

- ✗ International flights
- ✗ Entrance fees (including those for temples, shrines and museums) unless otherwise specified
- ✗ Baggage handling and luggage forwarding unless otherwise specified



## Sample Accommodation

*Please note that accommodation is subject to change. Final details of the accommodation will be included in your Info-Pack, which will be sent out approximately four weeks before departure. If you'd like to know more, please speak to your travel consultant.*

### Asakusa View Hotel, Tokyo

Located in the heart of Tokyo's most traditional district, the Asakusa View Hotel offers five-star accommodation and friendly service.

The View Hotel is the finest hotel in the Asakusa area. As the name suggests, the upper floors of the hotel command great views over the city, including Tokyo's newest and tallest landmark: the 634 m (2,080 ft) Skytree.

The hotel's 26th floor offers an incredible breakfast selection with stunning views. For dinner, there is also a French, Chinese, or Japanese restaurant on offer - as well as a coffee house, tea lounge, sake bar and all-day buffet. In addition to its excellent dining facilities, the hotel has a pool and fitness centre which can be used for an extra fee. Directly outside the hotel is Tokyo's newest subway line, the Tsukuba Express, which links Asakusa with Akihabara electronics district and the rest of Tokyo.

### Hanafubuki, Izu Peninsula

Set in a woodland grove, the Hanafubuki is a luxury *ryokan*, especially noted for its impressive selection of natural hot spring baths, lovely, individually decorated Japanese-style rooms, and beautiful location. The *ryokan* is located in the heart of the natural beauty of the Izu Peninsula and, although easily accessible from Tokyo, you will feel a million miles away from the busy metropolis. The Jyogasaki suspension bridge is just 20 minutes' walk from the inn and forms part of a scenic coastal path that is just footsteps away. In fact, weather permitting, the English-speaking manager will lead a guided walk, which you are more than welcome to join. Boat trips and a hike up the dormant Mount Omura volcano are also all possible from here.

A highlight of this *ryokan* is its choice of seven different hot spring baths. Each one is housed in a separate villa and is available for private use - just lock the door behind you! Similarly, mealtimes are a major treat - exquisitely prepared *kaiseki* cuisine attentively served in a beautiful Japanese dining room. There is a selection of breakfast options.

### Okura Hotel, Kyoto

This luxury hotel is located in downtown Kyoto. Established in 1888, the hotel has been extensively refurbished in recent years whilst thoughtfully retaining elements of history and tradition. The Okura is one of Japan's most prestigious hotel names and although not well known internationally, it is renowned for providing the very highest levels of service. Guestrooms are bright and spacious providing the ideal base for exploring the sights of Kyoto. The hotel has its own range of restaurants and bars, plus a huge range of facilities to take care of every requirement during your stay.

## Important Tour Information

### Fitness

Even when not using public transport, sightseeing in Japan often involves walking between sights, climbing up steps in temples and being 'on the go' for much of the day. To enjoy any of our Small Group Tours you should be of moderate fitness, able to walk and climb stairs without difficulty and able to maintain a pace that is comfortable for the majority of the group.

### Dietary Requirements

There are a number of meals included on all our tours. Please let us know in advance if you have any special dietary requirements and we will try to ensure that included meals meet these needs.

In addition, please note that dietary requirements (such as vegetarianism, gluten-free diets and even some allergies) are very uncommon in Japan so meals for those with specific requirements may be simpler and less varied.

On this tour you'll stay at a number of Japanese style accommodation, you will be served a traditional dinner, as well as a Japanese breakfast in the morning.

### En Suite /Shared Facilities

We aim to secure rooms at all accommodation with attached en-suite facilities. Culturally, communal bathing is common practice in Japan. Shared facilities (when included) will always be separated by gender.

### Policy on single rooms

Single rooms are guaranteed at all night stops on this tour through payment of a mandatory single supplement.

### Double rooms

Please note that in Japan, twin rooms are very much the norm, and there are far fewer double rooms available. Please understand that we will not be able to offer a double in every hotel on this tour.

A double grade does not guarantee double rooms throughout.

### Your tour leader

Our tours are led on the ground by a fluent English speaker, now a resident of Japan and able to speak Japanese. They are there to ensure that you get the most out of your trip and that the whole adventure goes smoothly. The tour leader travels with the group and stays at the same hotels and *ryokan*, so please feel free to ask for help or advice at any time.

Your tour leader is not a guide so may not know every historical detail of every shrine, temple or palace, yet they are available pretty much all day every day and will even be happy to accompany tour members out at night on occasion!

Please note that the tour leader reserves the right to deny participation in an activity if they feel that it is in the safety or best interest of you and/or any other members of the group. Similarly, dangerous weather conditions may lead to cancellation of such an activity.

### Luggage

We highly recommend that to make your stay more enjoyable you pack reasonably light. Large suitcases will be an inconvenience to you as you will have to carry your bags for short distances at times and some stations do not have escalators or elevators/lifts.

For ease of transit, we will be forwarding your luggage on one occasion and you will be without your main baggage for **1 night in Kyoto**.

You will need a small overnight bag (e.g. backpack) for use when we forward our main bags to the next location.

### Transport on tour

Please note that most transfers are by public transport making use of Japan's first-rate transport network. This tour uses a mixture of trains, taxis, public buses and boats, as well as private coaches for some transfers and sightseeing.

### International Flights

This tour starts in Tokyo for arrivals at Tokyo Narita Airport or at Tokyo Haneda Airport and finishes in Kyoto for departures from Osaka, Kansai Airport or Itami Airport. Please note that the included meet-and-greet and airport transfer to the first hotel is ONLY available from the two Tokyo airports. Add-ons back to Tokyo can easily be arranged. Please speak to your travel consultant about it.

### Check-in

Upon arrival you will probably be tired after a long international flight. Please note that rooms at the Tokyo hotel are only available **from 3pm**.

Hotels in Japan operate strict check-in policies. If you have an early arrival you can either book an extra night for any-time check-in, or the hotel will be happy to securely store your luggage for you whilst you go for a drink or explore the local area.

The tour leader will be staying at the first hotel for two nights before the tour starts so they will be available for advice if you choose to book pre tour nights. We recommend booking at least one extra night to check in and relax before the tour begins.